

working. By making the tough choices necessary to turn record deficits into record surpluses, we are now in a position to start paying down the debt. According to the latest numbers from the Department of the Treasury, we will pay down \$152 billion in debt in the 3 months from April to June—the largest debt pay down in our Nation's history. By the end of this fiscal year, we will have repaid approximately \$300 billion in debt. If we continue on this path of fiscal discipline, we can pay off our national debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President. This will keep interest rates low and investment high and lead to savings on everything from mortgages to student loans for working families across America.

Statement on Action To Resolve the Impasse Over Armed Forces Training on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

January 31, 2000

Today, I am announcing a course of action to resolve the impasse over United States Armed Forces training on Vieques. This course will give the people of Vieques the right to determine the future of the island while assuring that our training needs are met. I have received a letter from the Governor of Puerto Rico endorsing this course.

I am issuing two directives. They provide that between later this year and early 2002, there will be a referendum held on Vieques, in which the people of Vieques will be asked to choose between two alternatives. If they choose the first alternative, the Navy will cease all training on Vieques and leave the island by May 1, 2003. If they choose the second, training will continue on Vieques on terms that will be presented at least 3 months before the vote.

During the period leading up to the vote, training done on Vieques will be limited to nonexplosive ordnance—meaning there will be no live fire, and the Navy and Marine Corps will cut in half the amount of time they will spend training to no more than 90 days per year, which is what we need to meet our training needs. I will also implement measures to meet the health, safety, environ-

mental, and economic concerns of the people of Vieques, and I will ask Congress to begin transferring title to land on the western quarter of the island to Puerto Rico.

I believe this plan will help resolve the impasse over Vieques in the fairest possible way, because it will meet our training needs while giving the people most affected by this decision—the people who actually live on the island—the ability to choose for themselves the future of their island.

Memorandum on a Resolution Regarding Use of Range Facilities on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

January 31, 2000

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense;
Director, Office of Management and Budget*

*Subject: Resolution Regarding Use of Range Facilities on Vieques, Puerto Rico
(Community Assistance)*

By separate directive I have addressed the resumption of Navy and Marine Corps training on the island of Vieques.

1. Provided that training opportunity has resumed and is continuously available on Vieques, then within 90 days of this directive, I direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to request authority and funding (which with funding for projects described in paragraph 5(e) of the previously referenced directive will total \$40 million) from the Congress for the following projects:

(a) To support the construction of a new commercial ferry pier and terminal by the Army Corps of Engineers.

(b) To establish an artificial reef construction and fish aggregation program to create substantial new commercial fishing areas for Vieques fishermen. Until such time as these new fishing grounds are operational, this legislation will authorize direct payments of an amount (to be determined by the National Marine Fisheries Services) to be paid to registered Vieques commercial fisherman for each day they are unable to use existing waters because the Navy is training.

(c) To support expanding or improving the major cross-island roadways and bridges on Vieques.